

are the ports of export for other products required in the same quarter. Albany is right in the apple-growing district, and Mr. Drew tells us that 55,000 cases of apples were sent from Australia to the Dutch East Indies last year—52,000 of them from this State. The apples should be shipped from the nearest port, and Mt. Barker is only 40 miles distant from the port of Albany. Certainly flour and apples for the Dutch East Indies could be shipped from Albany. I thank hon. members for their patient hearing.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 24th August, 1926.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION — WATER SUPPLY, CHURCHMAN'S BROOK SCHEME.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Works: 1, What has been the cost of the Churchman's Brook water scheme to date? 2, What is the estimated cost of the completed work? 3, Will the scheme be completed within three years from date? 4, Is the Engineer-in-Chief satisfied with the methods under which this work is being carried out?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, £165,237 to 31st July, 1926. 2, £300,000, including all Head Office charges. 3, Yes. 4, Yes.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill No. 1 (£1,913,500.)

BILL—FEDERAL AID ROADS AGREEMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: The Bill consists practically of the agreement that has been signed by both the Commonwealth Government and the State Government, embodying the terms that were arrived at during a conference between Ministers from the States and the Commonwealth Minister, governing the provisions under which the Commonwealth propose to make £20,000,000 available during the next ten years. I do not anticipate there will be any objection by this Parliament to ratifying the agreement, because it will be agreed readily that the terms Western Australia has secured under the agreement are the most favourable we have yet secured under any financial arrangement between the State and the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is practically the same as the agreement in 1920.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, it is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Much of the allocation is on the same basis, but there is a considerable difference in the conditions, which have been modified. For instance, we pay only 15s in the £, instead of pound for pound.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope we will get value for our money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Some important modifications have been made. This means that we will now have ahead of us a definite road-making programme for ten years. As a result, we can look forward to very substantial improvements in the thoroughfares throughout the State. It will mean that we shall spend £672,000 a year for ten years, so that at the end of that term there will have been spent on road construction in Western Australia, £6,722,000, less

3 per cent. that will be paid into a sinking fund on the amount of borrowed money. It is laid down in the agreement that we have to find some of the money from revenue and our quota works out at £36,000 a year. That is definitely set out. How the State will find the balance of the money will be announced by the Premier when he introduces his Budget. He will then inform the House whether it will be raised from revenue, or what proportion will come from revenue, and the proportion from loan.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why £36,000 from revenue?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because the Commonwealth desired, and the States agreed, to a substantial proportion of the money from revenue, instead of the whole being charged to loan funds.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not a substantial proportion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It means that, under the present arrangement, even if the whole of the balance of the State's money is found from loan, there will be approximately 78 per cent. spent from revenue and 22 per cent. only from loan.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is that, of our 15s. in the pound?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, of the whole.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of the Commonwealth money as well as that of the State?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. That is, 78 per cent. of the whole amount will come from revenue. In other words, interest will be payable on only 22 per cent from loan funds.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course, we are not finding all that money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is provided in the agreement that during the first ten years the Commonwealth Government shall deduct from the money allotted to the State, 3 per cent. on the proportion of the loan moneys that the State contributes. The State Government will have to advise the Federal authorities each time they make an allocation from their loan funds. Following upon the receipt of that advice, the Commonwealth will deduct from the money available an amount equalling 3 per cent. that will be paid into a trust account for sinking fund purposes. It is considered that by means of investment and compound interest, the liability will be liquidated inside 20 years. In the next 10-year period, the State Government will have to pay 3 per

cent. on the amount borrowed. By that means it is hoped to accomplish the liquidation of the liability within the 20-year period.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is that taken out of the 15s., or does it come out of the total amount?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: During the first ten years it comes out of the money made available by the Commonwealth, so that it means we get that amount less the 3 per cent., as I have indicated already. During the second 10-year period we have to find the 3 per cent. to pay into the sinking fund. That sinking fund will be controlled and dealt with in the same way as other similar funds. To my mind, it is a very sound proposition. It means that we shall not be paying out for the construction of roads that will be worn out while we are still paying for the work. The roads will be paid for before they are worn out. We have to find, as I have already stated, £36,000 out of revenue, and Western Australia is the only State in the Commonwealth that will not have traffic fees to draw upon. In the other States the traffic fees are paid to the central authority, and the amounts spent by the Main Roads Board under the scheme from traffic fees will be taken as part of the States' expenditure. That is not the position in Western Australia because here our traffic fees are retained by the local authorities and will be spent in their respective districts. The expenditure under that heading will not be counted as part of the State disbursements.

Hon. G. Taylor: That means there will be so much more spent on our roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, by the road boards in their several districts. It means that in addition to the £672,000 each year, there will be the money spent by the local authorities on their own roads as well.

Mr. Sampson: They will have to take their share of the responsibility.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Nowhere else do the local authorities keep those fees. They go either to the Government or to the Main Roads Board.

Mr. Sampson: Under the Act the local authorities must find portion of the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only for main roads. In the other States they have to do the same thing and they do not receive the traffic fees. When at the conference I

tried to get the Commonwealth to agree that the amount of traffic fees collected here and spent by the local authorities on roads should be credited to the State as part of its contribution, but the Commonwealth could not make a distinction between the States. I was told it was a question of putting our own house in order. We should have got control of the traffic fees for our own Main Roads Board and then they would have counted. Unless the traffic fees were spent by the central authority, the amount could not be taken into consideration by the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. Taylor: You do not intend to interfere with those conditions?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. Sampson: It is not intended to interfere with the traffic fees?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The metropolitan traffic fees will continue to be distributed as at present.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We do not propose to alter the system of distributing the traffic fees. The fees collected in the metropolitan area will be pooled by the metropolitan local authorities and distributed on a chainage basis. Local authorities in the country collect their own traffic fees and spend them. Paragraph 5 of the agreement lays down the class of roads to be constructed. They are described as main roads that open up and develop new country; trunk roads between important towns, and arterial roads to carry the concentrated traffic from developmental main trunk and other roads. The only addition to the previous agreement is that we shall now have this money for main roads and shall not be limited to running out at right angles from a railway. I am sure that under this agreement the States will have a much freer hand than before. We shall not have the hampering restrictions in the choice of roads that previously existed, and there will also be a much wider interpretation than before.

Hon. G. Taylor: Who will decide what an arterial road is—the Commonwealth Minister?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We invited each of the local authorities to submit a five years' programme straight away. These programmes are in the hands of the Main Roads Board and are being examined. The board will make a recommendation to me, and the recommendation will go from

me to the Commonwealth Minister, who will approve or disapprove. At the end of five years a second five years' programme is to be forwarded to the Commonwealth Minister. The final decision will rest with the Commonwealth Minister, but so long as the programmes come within the terms of the agreement, he will not have power to disallow them.

Mr. Sampson: Has any objection been raised so far in respect to roads recommended?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, there have been many objections. A lot of roads were recommended by the road board that did not come within the Commonwealth terms.

Mr. Sampson: I mean roads recommended by the State to the Commonwealth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, an objection has been raised to some, but we sorted out the recommendations of the local authorities before forwarding our recommendations to Melbourne. All the by-road crossing a main road and the little cross roads that serve one or two settlers will not come under the agreement. The smaller roads will have to be provided by the local authorities.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you anticipate any difficulty?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. During the last 12 months we have got along very well with the Commonwealth authorities. They have been very reasonable in their dealings with us, and have met us in every possible way. In the first year or so we had considerable difficulty, but the Commonwealth engineer came over here and we took him for a run through the country and he now appreciates the difference between Western Australia and the other States. I believe the Commonwealth are prepared to meet us and to place a broad interpretation on the agreement.

Hon. G. Taylor: They will be guided largely by your decision?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I am convinced we shall get a liberal interpretation of the conditions, and I have no doubt that the programme approved here will receive approval in Melbourne.

Mr. Stubbs: Can any money under this scheme be allocated before the agreement is finalised, or has everything to be hung up until the agreement is finalised?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No money can be made available for a par-

ticular road until the programme including that road is approved in Melbourne. When the Bill passes Parliament, we shall be waiting for our Main Roads Board to complete their recommendations to me. We expect the Commonwealth engineer to visit Perth shortly. We wish to discuss several matters with him. We are hoping that if we can get his approval here, we might anticipate a little without waiting for Ministerial decisions. Still, no money will be made available by the Commonwealth until the Commonwealth Minister has approved of the five years' programme.

Mr. Stubbs: The winter is nearly over now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Members know that we have done our best and that there was no delay on our part.

Mr. Thomson: The Commonwealth have already given you a certain amount of money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, they have allowed us three months' money on the same basis as last year's allocation, but that money had to be spent on roads that had already been approved by the Commonwealth Minister. The work is proceeding now and will continue until the end of next month. We were most anxious that the work, particularly in the wheat belt, should be put in hand in the early part of the winter. We tried our best, but delay occurred in the East; two or three of the other States hung out for a long time and New South Wales stood out altogether. The Commonwealth were evidently waiting for a decision from all the States. It is only recently that the Bill passed the Commonwealth Parliament. We suggested that, even if it meant a special concession to us, it would pay us to have the money in order to get the work well ahead. We have anticipated getting the approval of Parliament in that we have appointed the Main Roads Board in order that they might get on with their part of the work. The Main Roads Act made no provision for funds for the board, and if this agreement is not ratified, the board will have no funds on which to operate. So satisfied were we of the liberality of the terms and what they would mean to Western Australia that we took the responsibility of appointing a board ahead. The board are now busy mapping out a five years' programme. Paragraph 6 of the agreement provides that at least one quarter of the expenditure must be on new construction.

Hon. G. Taylor: One quarter of the whole.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. That provision is included because Tasmania does not require new roads. She has practically all the roads she needs, and all that is required there is to bring the existing roads up to the standard that motor traction demands. Victoria is in much the same position. The Commonwealth, however, insist upon one quarter of the money being applied to new roads. That will not affect Western Australia, because we anticipate that anything from 75 to 80 per cent. of the money will be expended on new roads.

Mr. Sampson: The Federal aid roads grant is not necessarily for new roads.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One quarter of the money must be expended on new roads.

Mr. Sampson: It says on "construction," not on "new roads."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That means new work. If the money were spent on old roads, it would be reconstruction.

Mr. Sampson: The Armadale road was constructed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it was constructed and reconstructed. Very little of the money will be spent on reconstruction; we have so few roads to reconstruct. The roads in the country are practically only tracks.

Mr. Thomson: What about the Perth-Albany road? Would that be new construction?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Is that a road? It is a bush track. We have the power to say how much money shall be spent on main roads and how much on developmental roads. It will depend largely upon the recommendations of the Main Roads Board, but the board have in mind that about one half will be spent on developmental and a half on main roads.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It will have to fit our needs.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. It will be a matter of sorting out as the five years' programme develops. It cannot be definitely decided, but there is power to modify that. We have the assurance of the Commonwealth that if we lay down a five years' programme, and modification, alteration or re-allocation becomes necessary, and the State Government present a good case in favour of modification, the Commonwealth will agree to the money being transferred. In our State there is always a possi-

bility of new development necessitating the construction of new roads. We cannot say, five years ahead, what is in front of us. That point was thoroughly discussed at the conference, and it was agreed that, if the State could put up a case to the Commonwealth, there would be no difficulty in having the programme altered. Roads running through towns of less than 5,000 people will come under the scheme. This means that towns with more than 5,000 people will be outside the scheme. It is practically a country road scheme that will not operate in the metropolis. The agreement provides that there must be proper provision for maintenance. Our Main Roads Act sets out how that is to be done; therefore, we have no need to worry about that under this Bill. It is also agreed that if there is any balance from the fund at the end of the year it will be carried into the following year. The money will not be forfeited, although it is understood that the States will do their best to live up to the annual programme. In the past the Commonwealth would not meet any of the overhead charges. The State has had to meet all the cost of surveys, engineering, and preliminary expenses, and the initial outlay was running us into a cost of about 8 per cent. The cost is now below 6 per cent., and the Commonwealth have agreed to meet 2 per cent. If the annual cost was $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. the Commonwealth would still pay 2 per cent. in the same way as if the costs were 5 per cent. They will pay us 2 per cent. of the charges, which will be a substantial saving to us. I will give members some idea of the money that has been spent over the three years during which this arrangement has been in operation. The previous Government were notified by the Prime Minister on the 4th July, 1923, that £96,000 was available under the terms set out. On 6th February the then Government sent the schedules to Melbourne. When we took over, on the 24th April, the expenditure incurred by the previous Government was £31,179. The whole of that money had been expended by Government departments, and none of it by road boards. Under a scheme of this sort a lot of preliminary work has to be done.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Commonwealth did not know their own minds.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was considerable doubt for some 12 months

and none of the engineers knew where they were.

Mr. George: A scheme was sent to them and we thought they had approved. Then they disapproved and sent an officer over here. They again disapproved of what was put forward, and we went out of office. We could have done a lot of work, but we did not get the chance to do it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was considerable confusion, but I think things are now clear.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That was three years ago.

Mr. George: I hope we have them now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Out of the No. 1 grant work was carried out on roads comprising: clearing 135 miles, forming 84 miles, gravelling and metalling 150 miles, and 150 bridges and culverts at river crossings. The total expenditure at the end of that year was £79,194. The amount spent by the department, including sub-contracts, was £78,678, by road board £308, and by contract £208. Out of the No. 1 and No. 2 grants—including the balance of the No. 1 grant that was left over—work was carried out on 174 roads, comprising clearing 465 miles, forming 295 miles, gravelling and metalling 228 miles, and 90 bridges, culverts and crossings. The expenditure on the work carried out, including sub-contracts, was, departmentally £263,831, by road boards £26,960, and by contracts £2,981. Out of the No. 3 grant work was carried out on 141 roads, comprising 724 miles of clearing, 232 miles of forming, 131 miles of gravelling and metalling, and 493 bridges, culverts and crossings. Out of this the department spent £122,090, road boards £35,209, and by contract £6,248. In the North-West out of the No. 1 and No. 2 grants there were cleared 50 miles of road, 257 chains of forming, 37 chains of gravelling, 45 chains of metalling, 7 creek crossings and 5 river crossings. Out of the special grant of £48,000, that was made available to the States to be expended on main roads, work was done on three roads.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In addition to the others.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. G. Taylor: You have spent that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Work was carried out on the Perth-Northern road as follows (this was all departmental

work)—15 miles of clearing, 3 miles of forming and 3 miles of metalling. The amount of money allotted was £11,000 and the expenditure was £11,897. The strengthening and widening of the Helena bridge, which was carried out departmentally, cost up to the 30th June £1,957. The sum of £6,000 was allotted to the job. The Perth-Armadale road was carried out departmentally and included clearing, forming and metalling, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in each case. The sum of £50,000 was allotted to the work, and £18,159 was paid. A further contract has been let to the municipal road contractors, who have not yet finished their part of it.

Hon. G. Taylor: How much of the road is completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a good track now. I was over it on Sunday. It has to be strengthened in one or two places, and the top dressing of bitumen has to be added.

Mr. Sampson: Is it proposed to widen the bridge at Gosnells?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That has not yet been tackled by the Main Roads Board. We let a contract for the Balingup bridge, £1,000 being allotted and £727 spent. Out of the £48,000, the total expenditure up to June was £32,013. On the Armadale road we are trying out four different types of construction. The idea is to test them for durability, and see how they pan out for maintenance. A summary of the three years' work shows the following:—1,401 miles of road clearing, 625 miles of forming, 404 miles of metalling and gravelling, and 1,633 bridges, culverts and river crossings. This is a substantial amount of work. I have not been altogether satisfied with the way the departments have been run, but I think that certain changes which have been made will effect an improvement. I have personally urged the road boards to take up work in their own districts and do it themselves. I have travelled throughout the State, and met as many of the road board members as possible. I have been as far North as Lawlers, and as far South as Albany. I have also been through the wheat belt. I have urged the road boards to do the work themselves, because for small jobs of £1,000 to £2,000 it does not pay for the department to take over the work, and engage in all the transport of plant and men

from place to place. Instead of the money going upon roads it is going in transport charges. There has been an enormous improvement. When we took over, none of the money had been spent through the road boards. Last year they took contracts up to £35,209. This year there should be a considerable improvement on that. Practically all the road boards in the wheat belt will do their own work. In the case of the bigger and more difficult jobs, which are mainly in the South-West where road construction is more difficult, where there are more bridges to construct and where more skill is required, the local authorities would not be expected to do the work. I hope road boards will agree to do as much of the work as possible, and I am pleased that the Main Roads Board view the situation as I do, and are urging that this policy should be followed. I wish it to be known that there is no provision in this scheme for the expenditure of money in the metropolitan area.

Hon. G. Taylor: What do you call that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is hard to know how the Commonwealth will define it. They tried first of all to say that no money was to be spent within 100 miles of the city. We were able to show that a lot of new development is going on within 100 miles of the city, and they did not insist upon the same conditions here as exist in the Eastern States. There seems to be a certain section in the city who think that the policy under this scheme should be to continue the same class of road construction as the City Council have adopted in St. George's Terrace, and that this should be continued along our main roads throughout the country. They are talking about concrete roads and high class construction. They seem to think that this scheme is to be the means of providing high class roads over which they may run in and out of the city.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The money would not go far on that basis.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We could not get any distance out of the city if we followed that policy. The people who are talking like that, and who are so liberal in their criticism and fault finding in discussing the road policy so freely, contribute nothing in the way of suggestions except to have a little printed card on the wind screens of their motor cars saying "We want good roads," so that they may motor

up and down St. George's Terrace. That is about the limit of their contribution towards main roads.

Mr. Thomson: Can you indicate the type of roads to be constructed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The type depends on the class of country. I am not dictating to the engineers. They will advise me; that is what they are there for. So far as I can judge from my talks with them, however, they are in agreement with the views expressed by Mr. Calder, the chairman of the Victorian Main Roads Board, that for many years to come the development of Australia will depend upon the ordinary macadam road with bitumen dressing, and that we shall not be able to afford such high class roads as the United States and the old world are going in for. Our area is too big and our population too far flung for us to entertain that class of road construction. I do not anticipate that there will be opposition to the scheme. I believe Parliament will agree that we have secured very liberal consideration. When the matter was under consideration at the conference, I was indeed pleased at the stand taken by the Commonwealth Minister for Works regarding the opposition to the allocations made to the smaller States, particularly this State and Queensland. Those allocations were not secured without a struggle. The matter was fought out on the first day of the conference, and then it was reopened on the last day, when the whole case had to be fought over again. Now that it is a question of big money, the larger States have been raising substantial objections. While the measure was before the Federal Parliament, there was a cry raised in New South Wales and Victoria that Eastern States money was being taken to make roads in Western Australia. There was a standing head line to that effect in the New South Wales and Victorian Press. In fact, that was largely the case put up to the conference. It was urged that New South Wales and Victorian taxpayers would have to contribute the money, while Western Australia and Queensland would get the largest shares. However, our case was so strong that not much effort was needed to convince the other States, apart from Victoria and New South Wales. A great deal of Western money has been spent in building not only Eastern roads, but also Eastern factories and mansions.

Mr. Sampson: Western Australia is employing thousands of men in the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Looking back to the gold rush, we can recall how each mail that went East took scores of thousands of pounds earned here to keep families in the Eastern States. That applies particularly to Victoria. Knowing those facts, one would not have much difficulty in presenting an unanswerable case to the conference. Although Mr. Hill, the Commonwealth Minister for Works, was a Victorian member, and although heavy pressure was put on him by both the Victorian and the New South Wales representatives at the conference, he stood firm. At the close of the conference he said to me, "I have been telling the people here for many years what you have been saying, but I have not been able to get them to adopt such a policy." Ultimately the Federal Government themselves stood firm, and the offer is now made for our adoption. I recommend the Bill to the House. The work comprised in the 10 years' programme, if we can only get value for the money spent—

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is the point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we can only ensure that the very best value is got for the money here provided, the results will be wonderful. In the Main Roads Board we have men who know the work and will apply themselves to the task in co-operation with the local authorities. As a result of the proposed 10 years' work, the additional arteries of communication in Western Australia must add enormously to the prosperity of the State. Even a short time ago it would have sounded like a dream to say that Western Australia would be able to spend £6,700,000 within 10 years on roads. However, here is the realisation set out in concrete proposals, and the work only needs the approval of this Parliament in order to be started. The proposed roads will materially assist the man outback in his work of development, and will enormously improve the economic position of Western Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.22]: The Premier has asked that we should go on with the discussion to-day, and has promised to agree to the adjournment of the debate if any member should

desire that course. We are now beginning the real work of the session, and the Premier is anxious to have a few Bills transmitted to another place. This particular matter has been before us for months, and in any event it is only an extension of an arrangement which existed for a year before the present Minister for Works took office. Several years ago Mr. Bruce, on behalf of the Federal Government, made an offer of £96,000 on precisely the same basis as applies to this £384,000. The Federal Government said they would set aside £500,000 to be distributed among the States partly on a population basis and partly on an area basis. As we possess one-third of this continent, naturally the area basis suits us admirably. There is nothing new in that. The road grant is one of the good things for which we can thank the Federal Government. For the first time in the history of Federation they have departed from distribution on a per capita basis, which does not suit us at all, though it does suit rich and populous States like Victoria and New South Wales. South Australia, too, has been well served on that basis since she got rid of the Northern Territory. Queensland and Western Australia, however, were not in the picture. If we cannot see eye to eye with the Federal Government over the proposed discontinuance of the per capita payments, we can at least applaud them for this scheme. Of course, as usual with the Federal Government when making grants, there are conditions, some of them vexatious and unnecessary. Every little detail is gone into. The Federal Government ought to ask us to provide good roads with this money and see that the money is spent wisely. But there are a hundred and one conditions imposed. The Minister for Works said that the late Government were unable to spend the money offered by the Federal Government, or that we did not trouble to spend the first year's grant. That is not quite right.

The Minister for Works: You did not get much of a hustle on.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We did things. The Minister for Works merely talks about doing them. In point of fact, a good deal of argument took place, and there was not a whole host of men available just at the time the money was made available.

The Minister for Works: Oh, you could not get men!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not just at that time, and not without interfering

with other work that was going on. The Minister for Works must take my word for that.

The Minister for Works: I know more about the labour market than you will ever know.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am talking about work, not about the labour market.

The Minister for Works: You were talking about a shortage of men.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister can have all the credit he likes. He can say, "I did this; it was my special work to make this wonderful agreement." In any event, it took a great deal of argument to get anywhere in connection with the first agreement, and the Minister has had the agreement for two years and three or four months. Now he comes here and says he was able to arrive at a definite agreement. When the first offer was made, it was subject to all sorts of conditions. My Minister for Works, who had charge of the matter, was just as anxious to have road construction going on as the present Minister for Works is. But of course he was not permitted to do it.

The Minister for Works: That is just what I mean.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We all admit that in this House we should bow down to and worship the present Minister for Works. There never has been, and there never will be, in the history of this State anyone else so wonderful. I give the Minister credit for the work he is doing. However, it is not necessary to give the credit, because he takes it, and very willingly. Still, the Minister would lose himself in some of the gravel roads recently constructed if he went on them. After the spending of half a million on roads in two years, the roads were never so bad.

The Premier: We had better not go on then. If we spend six millions, the roads will be worse than ever.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: All the money that has been spent has not been spent on main roads. Clearing and forming has been done, and there are 4,000 chains of gravel and metal, though I do not know where. The new roads are not strong enough, except in certain spots. The one near Clackline is splendid, but very little of it will stand heavy traffic. The road to Chidlow is now worse than it was when we set out to do work on it. Someone has described that road as a mud hole. After the

summer I dare say it will settle, but meantime it is worse than it was originally, though a great deal of money has been spent on it. The trouble is that we are building roads which will not carry the traffic. If a man has a rope with a breaking strain of one ton and he puts a weight of two tons on it, the rope is bound to go. We have not enough money to build roads capable of carrying 7-ton or 8-ton lorries. If it is to be done, the Minister will have to build concrete roads at the cost of £5,000 or £6,000 a mile. I do not see just how the difficulty is to be got over. To me it seems almost a waste of money to put in roads that are bound to be cut up by heavy vehicles, especially in the winter months. The Minister pointed out that in a scattered country such as ours many miles of roads need to be made. No doubt the Minister could do a great deal of good work with this money if the heaviest vehicles could be restricted to two tons or three tons. But when it comes to carrying up to eight tons in a load, it is impossible to maintain the roads unless the Minister builds highways at a cost of £5,000 or £6,000 per mile. If the roads will not carry the loads, then the money spent on the roads is largely wasted. It would be right if the Minister went into this question of heavy traffic. Very properly he prevents heavy traffic over the roads of the South-West during the winter months. I cannot help thinking that the people running motor lorries on our roads must be losing money as the result of frequent breakdowns owing to the condition of the roads. In any event, I think we shall have to regulate the loads carried and the pace at which the motor lorries travel. Our railways run to virtually all the towns in the State, and we cannot afford to have roads and railways running parallel with each other, the railways carrying what I might call the low-grade traffic, while the privately-owned motor lorries carry the high-grade traffic.

Mr. Withers: What remedy do you suggest?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister should make some proposal to the House.

Mr. Mann: The same thing applies to the buses and the trams in the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But not to the same extent. The goods traffic is a very different matter. We cannot afford to have roads and railways side by side.

If by some equitable means we should decide that no further heavy vehicles were to be placed on certain roads, the position would be alleviated without harm being done to anybody. Let those people know that they cannot put any more motor vehicles on the roads and that they cannot make very much money out of the existing vehicles.

The Minister for Railways: We could regulate the load and the speed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would be very much better to make it clear that there is not much hope of success for heavy motor lorries over our roads during the winter months. They could still cart their wheat and other loads in summer time. It ought to be possible, without doing harm to anybody, to prevent further heavy vehicles going on to the roads. The Minister has made reasonably good roads, probably as good as could be expected with the available money, but those roads are giving way under the weight of the loads carried. I think we have had our lesson. The Minister knows how much money was spent on the Chidlovs road, notwithstanding which it has been knocked to pieces very speedily. That sort of thing will go on for all time unless the traffic is regulated. I hope the Minister will note the suggestion.

The Minister for Works: Before the session is out I will give you an opportunity to help us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister should take up the matter at once and prevent a continuance of the evil. At all events, I will help him to protect our roads and to produce reasonably good roads for our people. We must accept this grant. The Treasurer will have to finance about £288,000 per annum. That will not be a simple matter, for it cannot be raised by taxation. I do not quite understand the provision prescribing that out of £288,000 the Government must find £36,000 per annum from revenue. The Minister did not explain it; probably because no explanation is possible. I do not know why they cannot trust us to expend this money wisely. Of course, the House will accept the agreement, and we shall then be spending about £600,000 per annum on roads. The Minister told us last year that he had spent more on roads in two years than had been spent in the previous history of the State.

The Minister for Works: No, not quite that. However, we have spent a lot more than any other Government ever did.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was not you; it was the Federal Government. They have done it for you. At any rate, if the Minister was correct when he said that he had spent more in two years on roads than had previously been spent in the history of the State, I can only say that in the past we got better value for our money, since roads have been built all over the State, even from here to Wyndham.

The Minister for Works: There is no road at all up there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have been told that one can travel 50 miles per hour over some of the roads up North. Necessarily the Minister in the course of his very extensive trip must have struck a few bad roads, as indeed is shown by some of the photographs he brought back with him.

Mr. Coverley: Your Ministers never took the risk of being bogged up there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We never had two Ministers chasing each other around the North-West at one time, for we always had too much work for them to do. However, I agree that Ministers ought to travel. The Minister for Works had some experience of flood while he was up there and so, too, had I when I made my trip. I do not know whether the Minister proposes to divide this money with the people of the North on a population and area basis.

The Minister for Works: Do you suggest that?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, I am merely asking the Minister for information. But for the area of the North we should not have got so large a grant, and certainly there are some works in the North that ought to be attended to. For instance, there is that bridge at Carnarvon which can now be constructed; and there are roads the construction of which can be assisted in the way the Minister proposes. Most of the roads up there are pretty good although, of course, they have their weak patches that ought to be strengthened out of this grant. We shall only be treating the people up there fairly if we have some regard for their area.

The Minister for Works: All the road boards up there were well satisfied with what I offered them. It was a lot more than they expected.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It was not more than I expected. With so much money available we can afford to treat them

fairly, particularly as up there we have only the weak patches to mend, such as at Port Hedland, the crossing at the lakes, though at Carnarvon a bridge is necessary. However, the Minister has made promises. I promise to do a bit better when I get the opportunity. The Minister said that we must see that we get value. That is the whole point. I am glad the Minister is going to let the road boards do as much as possible. Out of £263,000, £21,000 has been spent by the boards. Out of £157,000 in the second year, £35,000 has been spent by the boards.

The Minister for Works: You are talking about the second and third years.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. I think that is a very good system. Whilst I am discussing this matter, I may express the hope that the engineers connected with the Main Roads Board will train young fellows in the work of road construction. Every road board in this country needs assistance and there are no men available. We have many young fellows who are seeking openings of this kind, and they could be trained.

The Minister for Works: We have quite a number and we are working in with the University.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have always had engineering students, but I am not talking about them; I am referring to the training of useful men whose services could be utilised in the direction of supervising, and doing other work for road boards. The Minister knows that some of our greatest roads in the Empire were not constructed by engineers. Telfer, the great road-maker, was a stonemason when he started road construction. Macadam, too, had a small beginning, and many of the roads in England were built by other than engineers. We need a number of men who can be made available to the road boards to help with the work of road construction. We get value when we employ good men who can administer well. We also get value when we employ good workmen and bad value when we have bad engineers and bad supervisors. We also fail to get value when we use bad material. I have looked into this matter of road making, and have found that the opinion of engineers is that the metal used on road construction should always be of one strength. It was explained

to me that if you put down 100 dray loads of stone of one strength and mixed with it two or three loads of a stronger metal, a bar would be created that would cause the road to wear unevenly. The bit of road outside the Works Department is wearing evenly and so it will last. Along the Mount's Bay road a year or two ago the ruts were filled with hard material and the result was anything but satisfactory. The material must always be of one strength. I hope, too, that the engineering section of the Works Department will see to it that proper tests are made with material.

The Minister for Works: We are having that done at the University; we have provided the plant.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But you want the people to do it in the country.

The Minister for Works: The material comes from the country to be tested.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The material should be selected by a first class official, one versed in making good roads. The road cannot be good if the material is bad. The Minister would do well to pay great attention to the question of selecting proper material. The Main Roads Board are to have charge of this work. I entirely approve of the appointment of Mr. Tindale and Mr. Anketell, because they are men of wide experience and will, I am sure, render good service. I cannot for the life of me see why Mr. Dibdin was appointed. He was a good official in the Chief Secretary's office and was satisfactory as a public servant, but when it comes to main road construction, I consider that his appointment was altogether wrong. I do not blame Mr. Dibdin for accepting £750 a year, but I do blame the Government for asking him to accept the position. I am always very sorry to discuss an appointment once it has been made. I have not done that very much in this House, although I have had strong objection to some of the appointments made. It is the solemn duty of the Government to make the best appointment possible whenever the opportunity is there to do so. We do not always succeed, but we should remember that appointments last a long time and we should always strive to get the best men possible. It does not matter where they are to come from or what their political faith may be. Nothing should count except ability. Mr. Dibdin's appointment was not a good one; I think it was a very

bad one and I would like to know from the Minister why it was made. If he wanted an expert accountant on the board—I do not say that he did—we do not pay them in the Public Service anything like £750. We pay barely that salary to the Under Treasurer of the State. There is therefore no justification for selecting Mr. Dibdin for the position to which he was appointed. The Minister could have done very much better. However, the appointment has been made and it is not with any pleasure that I criticise the official who has received it. At the same time we have our duty to perform as we are responsible to the people. I should like to know from the Minister why this was done. I should also like to know why men in Perth should be picked up for the work of road construction in the country. There are men in the country who want work.

The Minister for Works: They are getting it too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are not.

The Minister for Works: But they are.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then how is it that there are so many in Perth looking for work?

The Premier: They gravitate to the city.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They are told they must come to Perth to get a job.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

The Premier: I do not want them to come to Perth if there is work in the country.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier will agree that men in towns like Nottingham, York or Bunbury who are out of work should be given employment on jobs in those places. Those men believe, and I know they have been told, that they must come down here.

The Premier: Who told you that?

Mr. Marshall: There must be a misunderstanding; you are referring to the policy of the previous Government.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This is a matter that should not be treated lightly.

Mr. Teesdale: The member for Murchison is light all through.

Mr. Richardson: Light headed.

Mr. Teesdale: I did not say that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope I have been misinformed, and that the Minister will see to it that work can be had where the job is to be done.

The Minister for Works: I have said that repeatedly outside the House.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know that people in the country have experienced great difficulty in getting jobs and I can instance a few cases.

The Premier: It would be madness for any Government to say that a man had to come to Perth to get employment. Perth is just the place where we do not want them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I assure the Premier that they have come to Perth to get work and when they do so they leave their families behind.

Hon. G. Taylor: Men have been sent from Perth to the country to the detriment of the local unemployed.

Mr. Teesdale: Local labour is not employed in Kimberley. You send people up there.

The Minister for Works: For how long have you represented the Kimberley electorate?

Mr. Teesdale: I referred to the Kimberleys in a matter against the late Government. Be reasonable! Unemployed up there have been unable to get work that has been given to others.

Mr. Coverley: We do not do that. The general manager of the Wyndham Meat Works has the right, under an agreement with the unions, to work on a roster covering the men to be employed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition is speaking.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad to have the admission by the member for Kimberley (Mr. Coverley). So the unions have the say as to who shall be employed by the general manager of the meat works! He must have an agreement with the unions before he can work!

Mr. Teesdale: He fell in beautifully! I did not say it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Conditions and so on are fixed by the Arbitration Court, but here, apparently, the unions have the right to say what men shall be employed and so on.

Mr. Panton: That practice started under your Government's regime.

Mr. Coverley: Don't you believe in the men and the management agreeing—

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not believe in the management going to the Trades Hall and to the trade unions. It would seem that we have two managers for

the State trading concerns—the Trades Hall and the officer in charge of the work.

Mr. Teesdale: He has told you there are.

The Minister for Works: The same conditions operate at Wyndham now as operated when you were in office.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: However, the Wyndham Meat Works are not now under discussion. I hope the expenditure of the money under the terms of the agreement will result in opening up the State, making transport facilities more comfortable and cheaper than in the past. If that is not to be the result, it would be better not to spend such a large sum of money. The Minister for Works rightly said that he could not be expected to construct concrete roads under the Federal grants. It is obvious that that is the position because so many roads will have to be reconstructed, improved, or even constructed altogether again. I believe him when he said that we could not spend the money over unlimited areas, because our people are too far flung within our borders. If he were to construct a perfect road from Perth to Bunbury, the work would absorb the whole of the first year's funds. I endorse the attitude of the Minister which takes him further afield than that. I hope he will see that the State gets value for the money expended. I trust he will make sure that the best engineers available are employed to supervise the jobs and that the services of the best gangers are made available as well. In my opinion the real fault lies with the people directing the work, and not so much with the workmen. Often we blame the wrong people because of the excessive cost of works. Too often it is the supervision that is at fault. I hope that position will be rectified under the jurisdiction of the Main Roads Board. We should treat our workmen liberally and generously, but it must be impressed upon them that if they are to have continuous work, they must give value in return. Touching on the question of employment generally there is a great difference between the man who is working, and the man who is merely called upon from time to time, to work. The man who is working has a permanent job; he is able to get married and to settle down. Year in and year out, his wages come in week by week. He can live a life such as a civilised man should live. On the other hand, the man who is called up for work for a month and then has to stand down for a fortnight before getting a further chance to work, is not living the life a man should

lead at all. In the expenditure of these funds, we can so regulate the work that men who give reasonable service may be given an opportunity to settle down, more or less, in one district. If the men can regard their work as permanent, we shall get better service and we will be doing the men a service as well. We should remember that the man who goes on a job like this gets 14s. a day for a month or three months—

Mr. Sleeman: He should get a little more seeing that his is casual work.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I urge upon the Minister that so far as he can, he should keep the same number of men going all the time, making the workmen feel that we want them to have constant work rather than that they should depend upon casual work for a few weeks at a time.

The Premier: We will have to keep a fairly steady programme of work all the year round in order to spend the money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, but the men who build railways and roads have never been able to feel that their work was permanent or, at any rate, as continuous as possible. If we could engender that feeling, I believe we would get better value for the money expended. I congratulate the Minister upon having this enormous sum at his disposal. While I may criticise some features, I appreciate the work he carried out at the conference. He did very well indeed to secure this large sum. It is high time that some of the money we have sent East for so long, was paid back to Western Australia.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [6.10]: I realise that the House must of necessity accept the agreement entered into by the Premier and the representatives of the Federal Government. The agreement is a step forward in road transport matters throughout the State. I congratulate the Government upon the appointment of two local engineers to the skilled engineering positions on the Main Roads Board. I do not know the two officers personally, but it is gratifying to realise that we have men within the State with the necessary qualifications for appointment to such a board. It must have afforded considerable satisfaction to those interested when they realise that these officers, who, after years of service, had their efforts recognised by the Government. It was pleasing to see these officers receive the appointments instead of the positions, repre-

sented plums in the service, going to outsiders.

Mr. Richardson: That has been so during the past two years.

Mr. THOMSON: At any rate, I am pleased to have the opportunity to voice my appreciation of the appointments made by the Government. Large sums of money have been spent on road construction work and it was gratifying to me to hear the Minister say that he desired a policy under which the road boards would undertake road construction work. Under such a policy local employees resident in the various districts get their share of employment. Unfortunately in some districts the experience has been that men have been transferred from other parts to undertake work in the districts I refer to. To a certain extent that was to be expected because a man who was entrusted with the task of constructing roads for the Public Works Department, under the provisions of the Federal road grant, would get his gang together and when he was transferred to another district, naturally he would take his gang with him. On the other hand, the Minister desires that, as far as possible, the road boards shall construct the roads through their own districts. Under No. 2 grant I understand from the Minister that the Department spent £263,831 on road construction, the road board constructed roads costing £26,960 and contractors constructed roads on which £2,981 was spent. The Bill provides that work is to be done generally by contract except where the Minister considers it in the interests of the State that the work should be carried out by day labour or otherwise. That is a necessary provision. In view of the severe criticism I have received in the past, it is gratifying to know that such a clause is included in the measure. I have advocated in this Chamber and elsewhere, the principle of assisting the States according to their developmental needs. It was pleasing to me to hear the Minister say that the agreement represented the most generous and liberal ever entered into by the Federal Government and that the Federal Minister for Works (Mr. Hill) had stood solidly against the representatives of the Eastern States who desired the money to be spent on a per capita basis.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. THOMSON: The policy is a sound one, because it will mean the opening up and developing of vast areas in this State.

A sum of £600,000 a year wisely spent will revolutionise our country areas and make life for the people more comfortable than it has been in the past. To have a five years' definite programme laid down for road construction has never been possible in Western Australia, or, I think, in any other part of the Commonwealth. The present Minister for Works and his successors will be in a very fortunate position as regards road construction. The expenditure of £336,000 on developmental roads must prove of great benefit to new settlements. It is interesting to contrast the conditions that this expenditure will make possible with the conditions with which earlier settlers had to contend. In my own district there were patches known as glue pots, and producers were involved in enormous expenditure to drag their produce through them. Horses sank down to their bellies, and double teams were often required to drag half-loads. Where railways are not available, motor transport to the rail heads will be able to give more efficient service than is possible at present. As the Minister pointed out, some of our alleged main roads are merely hush tracks. The expenditure of £336,000 a year on such roads must prove highly beneficial, and whatever additional taxation may be incurred by motorists will be easily recouped to them by the increased mileage and the decreased wear and tear resulting from the provision of good roads. The Leader of the Opposition said he hoped that loads would be reduced, or that big motors would be debarred from travelling on the new roads. If it is intended to construct good roads, we should not object to good loads, because good loads will mean cheaper transport, and that is what we are aiming at.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Not while the roads are green.

Mr. THOMSON: Of course not. As the people using the roads will have to contribute to their upkeep, we should encourage the construction of good roads and the carrying of maximum loads. I have no desire to see loads carried that will break through the new surfaces, but if the new roads are to be of bitumen they will be able to bear heavy loads. Therefore I hope effect will not be given to the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I said that where a road would not stand a certain load, that load should not be allowed to go on the road.

Mr. THOMSON: If effect were given to that principle, some loads would not be permitted to go over our roads.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I meant motor lorry, not horse loads.

Mr. Clydesdale: The fast traffic is as bad as the heavy traffic.

Mr. THOMSON: I think so, too.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, that is not right.

Mr. THOMSON: If the speed could be restricted, less damage would be done to the roads. The road policy now proposed has been rendered possible by the liberality of the Federal Government in assisting the States on an area as well as a population basis. The system of financial aid being rendered us by the Federal Government follows the lines of the policy in force in America. Let me quote two States to show how the principle operates there. North Dakota in 1923 contributed to the national taxation 1,507,000 dollars, or .06 per cent. of the total Federal revenue. By way of road grants it received 7,185,000 dollars, or 1.59 per cent. of the total Federal revenue. Another State contributed to the national taxation 3,280,000 dollars, or .13 per cent. of the total, and received 9,422,000 dollars by way of road grant, or nearly three times its total contribution to the national exchequer. I would that this principle had been adopted by previous Governments. As the Minister for Works pointed out, we purchase over eight million pounds' worth of goods from the Eastern States annually, and that provides work for many people in those States. The present agreement is a just recognition by the Bruce-Page Government of the rights and requirements of this State. The agreement provides that one-quarter of the roads must be new roads, and we have been told that probably one-half will be developmental roads and one-half main roads. This means that of the expenditure of over £600,000 about one-half will be devoted to new roads and about one-half to main roads. Where a road passes through a town of 5,000 persons or under, it may be constructed without cost to the local authorities. If a road is constructed through a country town, the amount of money contributed by the local authority will be deducted from the State's quota. I hope when the Bill reaches the Committee stage the Minister will be able to make that paragraph a little clearer. I

can see a possibility of danger arising from it, because every country town might be faced with a question of contributing a considerable amount towards the construction of roads, and that would reduce the State's quota. The State has to make provision for the maintenance of the roads. I have no objection to that condition. The Federal Government are making such a liberal contribution towards road construction, that it would take the State many years to provide an equivalent amount. I note with satisfaction that if any amount provided for expenditure in the financial year is not expended, it will remain available for the particular work until it is completed. I congratulate the Minister on the Bill as a whole. He has certainly safeguarded the interests of the State to the best of his ability. I regret that, when moving the second reading, he did not indicate how the Government proposed to raise the money for their quota. Last year when he introduced the petrol tax, he clearly indicated that the Federal Government also would probably impose a tax on petrol, and it was provided that if they levied 2d. per gallon, the local tax would be reduced by a corresponding amount. As money for road construction has to be found by the State, the Minister should have indicated how he proposes to raise it.

Hon. G. Taylor: By increasing the land tax!

The Minister for Works: We will get £36,000 from the petrol tax.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister told us that the Treasurer, when introducing his Budget, would inform us how the State's quota would be raised.

The Minister for Works: That was the balance. I said that £36,000 must come out of the petrol tax.

Mr. THOMSON: Seeing that the principle has been so cheerfully accepted by the Government on this occasion, I hope we shall eventually find it adopted in other directions.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.46]: The principle of collecting money from the States for subsequent distribution by the Federal authorities has often received criticism at the hands of members. On this particular subject, however, there is no criticism. It has been acknowledged that since the Commonwealth has viewed the matter from the standpoint of area as well

as population, the interest of the State has been conserved.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It does not make the principle sounder.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not discussing the principle. I am delighted that the Federal Government have seen the great need for good roads and have taken this action. No better method of expending the funds of the Federal Treasury could be followed than is proposed under this Bill. The action of the Federal Government in this matter has been applauded throughout the State. I hope that as time goes on every State will approve of the principle. Whether they do or not matters little to us. Western Australia will receive the benefit which is so urgently required in this direction. Our producers have been in great straits in the matter of getting their produce to market, particularly during the wet seasons. The roads, when constructed, will relieve growers of a heavy burden, and make possible the cultivation of areas which are now idle. When a road is once made, constant care is needed. If construction has not been entered upon, the surface of the country used for roads will often stand up to traffic for a considerable time, but once the surface wears, road making becomes essential. Reference has been made to the cartage of material in motor trucks. I am of opinion that the loading of trucks should be limited to the loads they are licensed to carry, and that the regulation speed should be enforced. This should be a reasonable speed. I remember in connection with the 1-ton truck, when the regulations were before the House some months ago, a rate of 12 miles per hour was prescribed. That was an unreasonable speed for a truck of a 1-ton capacity. Later on it was decided to allow that speed to be increased to 20 miles. The Main Roads Board has a difficult task before it, and my sympathy goes out to the members of it. In regard to the allocation of the cost of different roads and the bearing of that cost by the local authorities, the Main Roads Board have a knotty problem to solve. How they will solve it remains to be seen, but that they will give careful consideration to it and come to a fair decision I have no doubt. Nevertheless, the principle is one the wisdom of which I question. There are main roads and minor roads all over the State. If the principle of allocating the construction and maintenance charges is to be applied to all the local authorities in proportion to which these local

authorities use the various roads, confusion worse confounded must arise. I do not know how the difficulty can be overcome. The Main Roads Board, in dealing with the special grant in aid, has this problem to solve. Parliament has given them that work to do. No better body of men could be appointed that would be more likely to make a good job of it. The expenditure of this enormous sum of money on roads is in the best interests of the State. It has long been acknowledged by those who have given any thought to the matter that money cannot better be spent than in road construction. A good deal of work must be done by the engineers. Great care must be exercised in the choice of the material that is used. I hope the testing plant that I understand was provided some time ago at the University will be utilised. In the opinion of engineers it is a waste of money to use materials that are unsuitable for road making. The road boards have been waiting with a good deal of anxiety for the decision of the Federal Parliament in respect of this agreement. There is complete unanimity of satisfaction throughout the country now that the agreement has been approved, and that a sum of money is to be utilised in constructing, reconstructing, reconditioning and repairing roads. Something has been said about local labour. I am glad to know that this is to receive consideration. I have been approached on many occasions with complaints that men living in country districts have been unable to obtain work on local roads, that they have been informed by foremen that they would have to come to Perth and apply to the Labour Bureau. If that state of affairs is at an end, there will be much cause for satisfaction on the part of the people. I understand it is the decision of the Minister that where work is being gone on with in a district it shall be the right of local people to share in the opportunity of carrying it out. Many of those engaged in primary production have great difficulty in carrying on during their first years. So great is their difficulty that if it were impossible for them to obtain work from neighbouring farmers, or occasionally from local road boards, they would be forced off their holdings. In view of the statement of the Minister, there is no need to labour this point further. I understand that local men are to be given an opportunity to start on work that is being carried out in their own districts.

The Premier: That is, any settler whose income is not over £1,000 a year!

Mr. SAMPSON: I cannot conceive of any settler with that income being desirous of working on roads. I am sure the Premier sympathises with the men who have to accept this work. The apportioning of this work comes terribly close to charity. I believe it is the rule to subject the men to a number of questions as to whether they are married and have families, and as to their need in respect of work. In view of the number of unemployed, I do not question that. Family men should receive the preference. Those who are wanting work on the roads certainly do not enjoy the income mentioned by the Premier. The work is laborious and comparatively poorly paid in relation to work where skill is required. I do not say that the pay is high as compared with the income of the small producer, very few of whom earn more than £250 a year, and whose income is not that when the charges upon the land and the outlay upon plant and labour are taken into account. The feeling in respect to the grant generally is one of enthusiasm. There is a belief that it will be possible soon to cultivate areas that are at present uncultivable. The traffic on the railways must largely increase. This seems a paradox. If, however, these developmental roads are constructed, the railway traffic must be greater than it is now. The Federal Government have been wise in deciding to spend some of their surplus revenue on this object, and I am pleased that we are to receive some advantage from the decision. In the Bill reference is made to the maintenance of roads. Too much importance cannot be given to this phase. Unless roads are maintained, they will soon become impassable. Road-making experts say that the moment a road is constructed, maintenance should begin. This has not always been the case. I have no desire to criticise the engineering branch of the Public Works Department, but if one did desire to do so, one would have plenty of opportunity. In the past roads have been constructed, and no provision has been made for their maintenance.

Mr. Mann: Is that the fault of the engineer or the Treasury?

Mr. Clydesdale: The money has not been made available.

Mr. SAMPSON: It would be the duty of the engineers to point that out.

The Minister for Works: What road is there in the State for which the Public Works Department are responsible?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am referring to some construction done by the Public Works Department on the Welshpool-road.

The Minister for Works: The Public Works Department have nothing to do with roads once they have been made.

Mr. SAMPSON: But the engineers should recommend that an amount be reserved for maintenance during at least 12 months.

The Premier: Does your own road board follow that method?

Mr. Clydesdale: As far as practicable, no doubt.

The Premier: You have been chairman of a road board for 20 years. Have you still to be told that roads need to be maintained?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am pointing out that fact to the Premier. The engineer should recommend that where construction work has been carried on, provision be made for the retention of a percentage of the amount in order to provide for maintenance. Unless maintenance is provided for, a good deal of the money spent on road construction will be wasted.

The Premier: Is not that well known to every fool on a road board?

Mr. SAMPSON: It may be known to every fool on a road board; but if it is not known to the Public Works Department, then my privilege is to point it out to that department. I know that I am on perfectly sound ground.

The Premier: Of course you are. Everybody knows it.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Premier knows it, still no harm will be done in making it clear to the Public Works Department.

The Premier: Do you want to make it clear that two and two make four?

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Premier will inspect the particular work to which I refer, he will see that what I say is perfectly right.

The Premier: Why do not your road board maintain that road?

Mr. SAMPSON: I have nothing to do with the district in which the road is, and I have no desire to bring the name of another road board into this matter. The professional knowledge of the engineers of the Public Works Department should have prompted them to recommend that a proportion of the money allotted to construction should be reserved for maintenance.

Mr. Clydesdale: Do not they know that without being prompted?

Mr. SAMPSON: There are the remains of the road.

Mr. Clydesdale: Remains of roads are to be seen all over the State.

Mr. SAMPSON: When dealing with members of road boards, we are not dealing with men who have had professional training in road construction.

The Premier: Are they not men of average intelligence?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am not reflecting on the members of road boards. The Premier, if he inspects the particular road to which I refer, must acknowledge that the engineers have been lacking.

The Premier: No. The road board have not found the money.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Public Works Department engineers should have recommended that an amount be held in reserve for maintenance. If the engineers did recommend that and the Public Works Department failed to do it, the fault does not lie with the engineers.

The Premier: The engineers know it is not the policy of the department to provide money for maintenance.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Premier is wrong there. It is the custom of the department to retain some percentage for maintenance.

The Premier: It is now, for these roads.

Mr. SAMPSON: And it was before this particular section of road was built. That being so, how comes it that the section was not maintained?

The Premier: The road board failed to do the necessary maintenance work on it.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know what the reason is, but it was an obligation of the engineers to recommend that an amount be reserved for maintenance. I cannot say that too often.

Mr. Mann: You are hardly fair. The engineers may have recommended it.

Mr. SAMPSON: If they recommended it, their responsibility is discharged. In any case, the work of maintenance should have been done.

The Premier: Some of the worst roads in the State are under the road board that you represent.

Mr. SAMPSON: I shall not dispute that, because it is a different question. Here there is money to do a certain work, and some of the money should be retained to provide maintenance.

Hon. G. Taylor: If the Government maintained the roads after construction, that would do away with the road boards altogether.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is widespread congratulation that this money is to be spent on roads. I am indebted to the Minister for Works, and I believe I shall have every occasion to feel indebted to the Main Roads Board. I believe every member of the community will have cause to feel indebted to that board.

Mr. Marshall: Do not be too optimistic. We want some of that money in our district.

Mr. SAMPSON: Certainly. Everyone in the State will benefit from the expenditure, and I hope that no one will regard the scheme in a parochial manner, declaring that money must be spent in a particular district. If some money is spent in Meekatharra—

The Premier: This money is going to give the greatest stimulus to parochialism the State has ever known.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is going to give the greatest stimulus to the right construction of roads. I am sure everyone is pleased that we are to have that money. We could not have money for a better purpose, and no money could be spent to better advantage for the State as a whole. I hope no time will be lost in giving effect to the principles contained in the Bill.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.9]: I shall not oppose the ratification of the agreement between the Commonwealth and Western Australia. By this measure something will be achieved towards the construction and upkeep of roads throughout the State. That fact, I believe, is appreciated by every member. But in connection with the Bill there are various problems which should be brought to the attention of the Minister. I desire from him an assurance that the measure will not affect my district adversely.

The Minister for Works: If you object, you will not get the money. I have any number of applications for the money from elsewhere.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am not objecting for a moment. The condition as to a radius of 100 miles from the metropolitan area has been waived. I would like the Minister, in replying, to give an assurance regarding

the commencing point of the radius. Will it commence at the Causeway, or will it commence at a distance of 25 miles from the metropolitan area? That assurance is necessary, because all of us will be taxed under the agreement. If roads from Perth to Manjimup and Bridgetown are to be considered parochial, the residents of the far South-West may find themselves specially taxed. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) dwelt on the question of the maintenance of roads. Last year the Minister for Works gave us an assurance that when developmental roads were constructed the Works Department would maintain them for the first 12 months, after which the local authority would be bound to maintain them. I pointed out then that the road between Pemberton and Northcliffe, which cost about £40,000, runs through 14 miles of State forest, on which the Warren Road Board cannot levy a penny. If the determination of the Minister for Works were given effect to, that road would be handed over to the Warren Road Board for maintenance. The board in question could not possibly maintain it for six months, and in 12 months the road would be simply a quagmire. I hope that in the course of his reply the Minister will state that provision will be made at least for the maintenance of that mileage of road. It is only a fair thing. Still speaking parochially, let me point out that in my electorate there are many miles of road on which a great deal of money has been expended. Undoubtedly the road system is a great factor in the development of the South-West. All of us know that the roads constructed in the group settlement areas were maintained by the Public Works Department for the first 12 months. I should say the extent of those roads is something between 100 and 200 miles, and in respect of them there is no revenue or rating from the groups, nor can there be for years to come. How shall the local authority maintain those roads?

The Premier: By working bees on Saturday afternoons.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It will not do for the State to allow those roads to fall into disrepair. Some provision must be made for maintaining them until the group settlements are available for rating. I hope the Minister for Works has not overlooked these problems. If they do not receive consideration, then in one or two years the thousands

upon thousands of pounds spent on road construction in the wet climate of the South-West will prove to have been wasted: the roads will simply go to destruction. Another problem is the timber industry as it affects the roads of the South-West. The member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) pointed out the different effects of horse traffic and motor traffic on roads, and the respective limitation of loads. It is difficult to limit loads. The Government in the first instance license motor vehicles, and the traffic fee is based on the weight that can be carried per wheel. Some motor lorries are licensed up to five tons, and some up to only 30 cwt. How are the Government officials to ensure that the vehicles do not carry more than the authorised weight per wheel over the roads? How are we to limit the speed? Since we collect licensing fees we must allow a man to travel at reasonable speed. The timber industry is the life-blood of the South-West, notwithstanding which we have on the Table regulations prohibiting the timber carter, and therefore the hewer, from earning a livelihood during the four winter months. There is another problem for the Minister, who has to say whether he is going to charge the traffic fees and then keep the carters off the road. And as we cannot limit the speed, so too we cannot limit the weights, for we charge a license fee proportionate on the weights carried.

Mr. Lindsay: No.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But it is so.

Mr. Marshall: Is not the fee based on the carrying capacity of the vehicle?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, it is. I hope the Minister will not lose sight of the question of the maintenance of roads. It affects most of our country members. If, after a large amount of money has been expended on the construction of a road, that road is handed over to the local authorities to maintain, I am afraid that in many instances the maintenance will not be satisfactory.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [S.18]: I suppose I can join in the chorus of commendation passed on this agreement. When I hear that £672,000 per annum is to be provided for the construction of main roads to open up new country it appeals to me very much, since I have such a vast area of new country in my electorate. I am pleased to see that the old bone of contention is to be removed and that the local authorities will be allowed to do this work by contract.

That was a sore point with many of my boards, who complained that under the old system the best value for the money could not be secured. I notice that all necessary surveys are to be made by the State. Why we should have the Federal Department in it at all I cannot imagine. The agreement provides that where a road is being constructed to pass through a country town, the State may take that road as though no town existed and make the necessary arrangements with the local authorities. Speaking on behalf of the six road boards I represent, I am pleased to see that we have a very good agreement.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [S.21]: The Bill can scarcely be described as a Committee Bill. It will be disposed of practically on the second reading. It is merely to ratify an agreement made between the Commonwealth Government and the State of Western Australia. That agreement is set out in 15 clauses and is signed by the Prime Minister and by the Premier of Western Australia. The Minister for Works will agree that we are scarcely competent to alter the agreement in Committee. Rather are we called upon to ratify the agreement. I have no objection to ratifying it, save that I notice the Federal Minister for Public Works is to have the final say in all expenditure, and as to how roads shall be declared. I was glad to hear the Minister for Works assure us that he did not expect any difficulty on that score. Still one cannot blink the fact that while we are getting this money from the Federal Government it is drawing us closer to unification, a condition that none of us likes. The old adage has it that the man who pays the piper calls the tune; and so we have to agree that the Federal Minister should have the last word. It is evident that we are not managing our own affairs in respect of roads. I am glad the Minister for Works realised the necessity for appointing the Main Roads Board. I approve of the personnel of that board, and I am sure that Mr. Tindale, the chairman, and his colleague, Mr. Anketell, will be able to give the Minister the best expert advice. This road work will be quite safe in the hands of those engineers, and I hope they will not be hampered in any way. Moreover, I trust that the local authorities will be allowed to carry out as much of the work as possible. It has been argued here to-night that public works frequently draw people to Perth in search of employment.

That condition of affairs has obtained for many years past. Three or four years ago, employment at the Wyndham Meat Works was secured in Perth. The engineer in charge at the works told me that the men were being engaged through the Trades Hall, Perth. I am not blaming the present Government for that, because they are only carrying on what has obtained for years past. I hope the local authorities, when engaged on road work will be allowed to employ whom they like, and that as much as possible of the work will be done by contract. It has been emphasised to-night that we require to get value for our money, and I am sure the contract system affords the best way of getting that value. I do not hold the view expressed by some members to-night that we are not justified in having our main roads running parallel with our railways and so affording facilities to private people to compete with the railway system. Having regard to the immense capital value of our railways, surely to goodness they can compete with the small man owning a char-a-banc or a motor lorry!

Mr. A. Wansbrough: We could if we ran our trains by daylight.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I suppose the owner of the motor lorry or char-a-banc will run both day and night, just as the trains do. Our railways and tramways ought to be able to compete with small private people in respect both of passenger and goods traffic. I am not inclined to say that a man must carry only small loads on his lorry. Bring down the tonnage to be carried, and you will drive the man out of business. Many years ago in Queensland the teams used to cart 10 tons and 11 tons of wool on a bullock wagon over ordinary bush roads. Certainly it could not be done in wet weather, and frequently there was difficulty in crossing the sandy beds of rivers. If we could make our roads fit to carry big tonnage, so much the better. It is only in a very wet winter that the roads cannot carry fair and reasonable loads. As to the Federal Minister for Works, the State Minister has told us he has had 12 months' experience of the gentleman and that he does not anticipate any trouble. Let me assure him that as soon as any trouble does arise, the Federal Minister will be on the box seat, especially as in Clause 15 "Minister" means the Federal Minister for the time being.

Mr. Thomson: But we have been working under that agreement for the last three years.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The manner in which we worked in the past is no criterion as to the way we are going to work in the future. I am quite satisfied that if the Minister accepts the advice of his engineers, and they are allowed a free hand, we shall never have any cause for complaint.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [8.32]: I do not intend to delay the House, but I am not going to allow the Bill to go through without expressing some opinions. This is the first time since I have been a member of the Chamber that a Bill of any importance has been brought down and put through in the one sitting. Usually we are given time to digest what a Bill contains; this time we are asked to accept the Bill *holus bolus*.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Leaders have accepted it.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not saying that there is any trickery about it. Those who are conversant with the facts tell me that one-third of our produce is lost annually because of the bad roads, and anything that will overcome such waste will be appreciated by members of this Chamber. At the same time I am somewhat dubious about the attitude of the Federal Government on this matter. Whilst I accept the offer of the Federal Government, I would rather see the report of the Disabilities Commission carried out, so that we might get something direct from the Federal Treasury which could be spent by the officers of this State. To me it seems that the Federal Government are gradually worming their way in and trespassing on the domestic legislation of this and the other States. If, as has been suggested, that is tending towards unification, it will not receive my support. The Federal Government cannot possibly administer the affairs of the State as well as can the State Government. If the Federal Government is to be permitted to encroach upon our rights, we might as well have remained under the administration of Downing-street. We find that the Federal Government are making a certain grant and imposing conditions. Unfortunately, most people in this State believe, or are under the impression, that it is solely Federal money that is going to be devoted towards road construction. The State is contributing pound for pound.

Members: Fifteen shillings in the pound.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am speaking of the past. Over and above what we are contributing we are paying the administrative costs.

Mr. Lindsay: They are not intelligent people who believe that.

Mr. MARSHALL: The people to whom I am referring come from Toodyay. I will vote for the Bill, but I am sorry that we are getting the concessions with restrictions. It would have been far better if the Federal Government had handed us back Customs and Excise duties collected in this State, and permitted the State Government to look after its own affairs. Seeing that the roads are essential, I shall support the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum)—South Fremantle—in reply) [8.37]: There are a couple of matters to which I was asked to refer in my reply. The first relates to the £36,000 that must be contributed from revenue, and how that figure was arrived at. The Commonwealth, in making the £384,000 available, undertook that a fourth of that should be provided from their existing sources of revenue. Their first request was that the State should undertake to provide their share from revenue. That would have left £72,000 to find from revenue. After argument, however, the figure was reduced by half and that is how we get the £36,000. The other point, raised by the Leader of the Opposition, related to the appointment of Mr. Dibdin to a position on the board. I was asked to give reasons for that appointment. The plain reason is that in the judgment of the Government Mr. Dibdin was the best man for the job. We made thorough inquiries and consulted the Public Service Commissioner. There were three names to select from and Mr. Dibdin's was the name recommended. He was given the position because he was regarded as being one of the brightest young men in the service. Mr. Dibdin will have nothing whatever to do with the accounts beyond general supervision; the accounts will be looked after by the Public Works Department. That department, too, will keep all the Board's records, and I have transferred the whole of the control of the roads and bridges branch to the Board. In this way there will be no duplication. The reason Mr. Dibdin was appointed was because we were advised he had shown a special

aptitude for organisation, as well as being one of the brightest young men in the service. I thank members for the cordial manner in which they have received the Bill. It does not call for much discussion in Committee as there is no opportunity for making any amendment; it has to be accepted as it is, being an agreement between the Federal and the State Governments.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Ratification of agreement:

Mr. THOMSON: It might be possible for an impecunious Government to force a lot of expenditure on local authorities. The Minister might explain this.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The section in the Main Roads Act dealing with this matter is exactly similar to the section appearing in the Acts in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. Thus the State Main Roads Board has the right to charge up against the local authorities 50 per cent. of the construction costs of a main road. That percentage is spread over all the road board districts that benefit because of the construction of that road. Now that the agreement has been arrived at with the Commonwealth Government and money is to be made available for the construction of main roads, some of the road boards are under the impression that the local authorities have to pay half the expenditure. That is not so. All the local authorities have to pay is half the expenditure incurred by the State. That is to say, out of every 35s. spent on the main roads, the local authorities will be responsible for the payment of 7s. 6d., which is half of the State's contribution of 15s. Moreover, they are not asked to find that money. The State will do so and it will represent a loan for 30 years to the local authorities, who will have to meet the charges on that money only.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The local authorities retain the traffic fees. Will those be sufficient to cover interest?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: More than sufficient. In addition, no one road board, through whose area the main road may pass, has to pay that, but the expendi-

ture is spread over all the districts benefiting by the construction of that road.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about maintenance?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Main Roads Act deals with that question. We need not drag that Act in, because that is the law of the land to-day.

Mr. Teesdale: You recondition all the existing roads once.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We keep them in order for 12 months and then hand them over to the local authorities.

Hon. G. Taylor: And then you are finished with them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is the position.

Mr. SAMPSON: Paragraph 8 of the agreement contains a provision that if a road is not kept in a proper state of repair, the State shall not, if the Minister so directs, be entitled to further payments from the trust account until the road is put in a state of proper repair. That is a good provision. What amount of interest is fixed for the sinking fund?

The Minister for Works: I explained earlier that a charge of 3 per cent. was to be made.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The maintenance of a road will be far more costly after 20 years than the construction, unless the work is done on a very solid basis indeed. We have not yet learnt to make roads that will stand up indefinitely to the heavy motor traffic. The Minister is expecting a lot from the local authorities when he asks them to find half of what the State Government has to provide, and then to require them to take the responsibility for maintenance after the 20-year period.

The Minister for Works: That is only on the main roads.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister knows that a small percentage of the traffic only is really district traffic.

The Minister for Works: But the responsibility for the 7s. 6d. will be spread over all the districts affected by the main road.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That will not be an easy matter to determine.

The Minister for Works: All this comes under the provisions of the Main Roads Act.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The local authorities collect the traffic fees and that may enable them to show a profit on the deal.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They will not collect enough to maintain the roads.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It all depends upon how the roads are constructed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. The Minister has already told the House that he will not be able to afford to construct concrete roads. We have to maintain a tremendous mileage of roads and make them reasonably good for traffic. In the South-West good gravel roads have been put down, but the heavy timber traffic has cut them to pieces and made them almost impassable. I do not oppose the passing of the schedule.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I should like the Minister to make it clear that this proviso will not cause any complications as regards the ratification of the agreement. It appears that we are ratifying the agreement subject to a proviso, and the question is whether that will lead to an argument with the Federal Government. Have the Federal Government agreed to the ratification with this proviso?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That point has been thoroughly examined by and discussed with the Crown Law officers. We are ratifying the agreement conditionally upon something being done. The Solicitor General considers the proviso essential; otherwise it might be open to the State Government to book up the half-cost to the local authority. The proviso will not interfere in any way with our arrangement with the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. Taylor: Will anything in this agreement conflict with the Main Roads Act or vice versa?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, this is the only point that we thought might give rise to conflict.

Mr. THOMSON: Paragraph 8 of the agreement states that such maintenance shall be taken in hand immediately following upon the completion of the construction or reconstruction of any road or portion thereof and shall be met from moneys provided by the States. I take it that relates to the money provided by the local authorities.

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. THOMSON: The Kojonup Road Board has approximately 30 miles of main road in its district. What proportion of the cost of constructing that road would be levied on the local authority? If they had to pay half the cost of the maintenance of

the 30 miles, it would be a heavy tax on them.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Are we in order in discussing the provisions of the Main Roads Act?

Hon. G. Taylor: We are discussing the relation of the agreement to the Main Roads Act.

The CHAIRMAN: This measure is certainly interwoven with the Main Roads Act, but it seems that members are making further second reading speeches.

Mr. THOMSON: Katanning is in much the same position as the Kojonup Road Board, and I should like the Minister to deal with the point I have raised.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has been discussing the provisions of the Main Roads Act. I am much obliged to Parliament for having removed that responsibility from my shoulders. The Main Roads Board have to decide that question, and I do not come into the picture at all. The Main Roads Board will have to decide the benefit derived by the various local authorities from a particular section of work.

Mr. Sampson: Is it possible for them to do it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Parliament has laid upon them the duty of doing it. How near they will get to satisfying the local authorities, I do not know. They will probably be able to get a record of the traffic over the road, estimate the service rendered to the various districts, and judge in what proportion the districts served should contribute to the cost. This is done in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, and the Main Roads Board will have precedents to guide them. It is amusing to recall how strongly some members advocated the removal of this matter from political control. When the Road Board conference met in Perth recently, members requested me to meet a deputation and discuss the matter with them. I told them to go to the Main Roads Board, and some of the members, who had been strongest in advocating the removal of this matter from political control, said, "We do not want to deal with the Main Roads Board; we want to deal with you"! But they got pushed back. The Main Roads Boards in other States have kindly supplied all the information asked of them, and their experience will be availed of by our board. When information is

sought on the point under discussion, no doubt it will be made available.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—WYALCATCHEM RATES VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [9.15] in moving the second reading said: Under the Road Districts Act road boards cannot strike rates on the annual value without first obtaining the consent of the Government. This consent has to be issued by proclamation, stipulating the area over which it is proposed to strike that rate on the annual value. The Wyalcatchem Road Board struck a rate during the last two years on the annual value without this authority. This Bill is one which most governments have to bring down during each session in order to ratify the errors that have been made by some local authorities. It is to legalise a step that has been taken by this particular road board. There is nothing wrong in the rate that has been charged; it is merely that the board neglected to comply with the necessary formalities and obtain a proclamation from the Government.

Mr. Lindsay: Have they to get that every year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and it was not done. This is not a singular case. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [9.16]: I am rather surprised at the reply of the Minister to my interjection. I was the first chairman of this road board. I had to make application that the Wyalcatchem town site should be proclaimed an area, and there was no mistake about it then. I have not been chairman for the last two years. I notice that this Bill covers the year 1926. During the week end I was at Wyalcatchem, and asked the secretary of the road board if he knew anything about the matter. He was not able to give me any information. The Bill refers to rates levied on the annual value for the year ended June 30, 1926. That is not quite correct. The rates for the Wyalcatchem town-

site prescribed area for that period were levied on the unimproved value.

The Minister for Works: I have the proclamation here.

Mr. LINDSAY: The rate was struck for the prescribed area. We want to get more rates from the townsite than from the surrounding district. The rates levied in the prescribed area are spent there. In the early days the board decided to rate on the annual value, much against my wishes, but last year the rates were levied within the prescribed area on the unimproved value. The rates within that area were higher than they were outside. They have been paid, and rate-payers have raised no objection. I was not aware that application for this proclamation had to be made each year. I thought once it was gazetted the matter was done with.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Pantou in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Validation of rates :

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I should like a definite statement from the Minister as to whether these rates were levied on the unimproved value or on the annual value. There appears to be a conflict of opinion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have here the proclamation and the minute of Executive Council. This defines the area and states that the board may rate on the annual value as set out in the proclamation. The hon. member has been wrongly informed.

Mr. LINDSAY: I know that the rates were levied last year on the unimproved value. I think the board went over the limit in the matter of rates, and that their action had to be approved by the department.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will have that statement checked.

Progress reported.

BILL—SOLDIER LAND SETTLEMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [9.25] in moving the second reading said: It would be advisable for me to point out the system adopted in settling soldiers on the land in Western Australia. If I mistake not, every other State entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government with the exception of Western Australia. Western Australia worked all this settlement on a letter from the Commonwealth, without entering into any agreement or having their action ratified by Parliament. The letter provided a limitation first for soldier settlement, and later agreed that moneys expended on this work should bear a 2½ per cent. rebate of interest to meet losses and rebates of interest that had to be allowed to the soldiers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You say it was 2½ per cent.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: For five years. It also provided that no moneys had to be expended over the amount stated in the letter without the consent of the Commonwealth Government. Up to July 1st, 1924, all the moneys expended outside the Industries Assistance Board, carried this 2½ per cent. rebate of interest on all loans raised by the Commonwealth for this purpose. When the agreement was sent over for our consideration we discovered that there was no provision for continuing this soldier settlement, and that the 2½ per cent. rebate would no longer continue. In discussing this matter with the Treasury officials in Melbourne, after seeing Dr. Earle Page, I found that after the 1st July, 1924, all moneys obtained for soldier settlement in Western Australia were raised by the State and not by the Commonwealth Government; hence the State was no longer entitled to the 2½ per cent. rebate. There had been a Loan Council meeting in Melbourne. The amount required for soldier settlement was included in the amount of loans that the Commonwealth had to raise for this and other States. I believe the total amount this State received from the loans raised in Australia that year was £1,200,000. The balance making up a total of £4,000,000. had to be raised in London and elsewhere. Prior to that year the Commonwealth provided the State with moneys necessary for soldier settlement, according to the demand that was made quarterly for the amount of expenditure. That was considered to be a Commonwealth loan to the State. When the Com-

monwealth raised loans through the Loan Council and a total of £10,000,000 was raised for the States, the stand was taken that any of this money used for soldier settlement was not a direct loan to the State by the Commonwealth and could not carry the 2½ per cent. rebate previously allowed. It was regarded as money borrowed by the State. Thereupon I requested that the 2½ per cent. rebate should be continued, as there were a number of qualified settlers who had not yet come on the land. The request was refused, and at last the matter was referred to the Commonwealth Government, from whom I received the following communication:—

I much regret the Commonwealth cannot accede to the request made by Mr. Angwin for the extension of the 2½ per cent. concession. When the Commonwealth was considering what relief should be granted, the claim of Western Australia that the rebate should apply to additional State expenditure was kept in mind. It was decided, however, that all further relief should be given by writing down the State's indebtedness. Relief given in this manner is of greater benefit to the State than the extension of the concession of 2½ per cent.

After the 1st July, 1924, the 2½ per cent. rebate ceased in respect of all new loans.

Mr. Thomson: Did it cease for the other States at the same time?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The number of settlers is 5,274. As I stated the other evening, the total advances approved amount to £6,021,197, and the total advances made are £5,569,867. A reference to the Schedule shows that the total amount advanced to Western Australia for soldier settlement prior to the 1st July, 1924, was £5,463,782. It is this amount that the Commonwealth Government propose to reduce by £796,000, which would make the State indebtedness in this respect, if the agreement is ratified, £4,535,202. On the amount of £5,463,782 there has been allowed a rebate of 2½ per cent. for a period of five years, but since the 1st July, 1924, the State has advanced £634,648 on which there will be no rebate of 2½ per cent. The rebate for a period of five years would represent a payment of £79,330. A number of settlers on the land under the Soldier Settlement Scheme were placed after the 1st July, 1924. Up to the time of my meeting the Commonwealth Government in Melbourne, they were placed on the land under exactly the same conditions as all other soldier settlers. They expected to be allowed the usual rebate of interest. By referring to the Schedule

members will see the rebate of interest which those settlers should obtain. However, it is a matter of impossibility for the Commonwealth to allow them the 2½ per cent. In fairness to the Commonwealth people, I should mention their statement that for the year in question they took that matter into consideration. They said that if we desired it, they had no objection to allowing us the 2½ per cent. for five years, but that there would have to be a corresponding reduction in the capital allowance of £796,000. This made no difference whatever so far as the State was concerned. Eventually we came to an agreement that the matter should remain as it was and that the £796,000 should be allowed. The Schedule to the Bill shows what is provided in this connection, but before dealing with the figures I wish to point out that on the 13th July, 1925, we received information regarding the proposed reduction in the cost of soldier settlement on the land. These words appear in the letter—

As it is evident the losses of the States will be greater than at first anticipated, the Commonwealth has been considering what further assistance it should grant the States so as to provide for the equitable distribution between the Commonwealth and States of the total losses. After a careful review of the position, my Government is of opinion that the proper course to pursue now is to write off £5,000,000 of the loans made by the Commonwealth to the States for soldier land settlement. This would bring the Commonwealth's share of the losses to more than £10,000,000 and my Government believes such a contribution from the Commonwealth would be sufficient to cover more than half the total losses involved in the Soldier Settlement Scheme and would enable the States to deal justly with all settlers in difficulties.

The letter is signed by the Prime Minister. I discovered in Melbourne that there appears to have been a certain arrangement whereby the States undertook to bear half the losses. Still, I could find no record anywhere of the making of any such arrangement.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It never was made.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Nevertheless, there seems to be a general understanding that the States are to bear half the loss. That matter caused a little discussion some time ago, and I took up the attitude that this State, through the concessions which it was making in respect of soldier settlement under the scheme, was really providing rebates equal to those of the Commonwealth, on a fifty-fifty basis. I have had a

return prepared showing what the amount is. Hon. members know that all land taken up by Australian soldiers is sold to them at half price. Land taken up by an Australian soldier prior to his going to the war was also reduced to half price. Further, the soldier received a concession in application fees and mortgage fees, as well as a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in interest on the rate which a civilian client of the Agricultural Bank would have to pay. The return which I have had prepared is not quite up to date, and the amounts are probably slightly greater now. On land held, reductions in price total £183,864. Those reductions were made to soldiers who held land before they went to the war. Reductions in the price of virgin Crown lands taken up by soldiers total £342,941. In respect of application fees payable to the Agricultural Bank the reductions equal £44,609. The reductions in mortgage fees amount to £30,000. Interest on rebates accounts for £137,078. The reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in the rate of interest payable by civilians, being granted over the whole period of the loan, makes a difference of £564,782. The total of these allowances and deductions is £1,297,274. The argument has been used to me that these are not cash payments. That is true; but if the settlers in question had been civilians instead of soldiers, the State would have got that amount of £1,297,274. Thus the concessions are equal to cash from the State's point of view. I therefore adhered to my attitude that the State was giving fifty-fifty with the Commonwealth. Then I pointed out that it was understood these concessions were for the soldiers, communications to that effect having been received from the Returned Soldiers' League. No matter what the State lost, these concessions were for the soldiers. Mr. Bruce in his letter said it was evident that the States would lose more, and he also stated that he wished to assist them.

Mr. J. H. Smith: The soldiers meant a great deal to the State.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If there had been no soldiers, there would now be no State.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Then why should not the soldiers receive concessions?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The rebates on loans to soldier settlers mentioned in paragraphs 14 and 15 of the Schedule, up to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum over a period of five years, will represent £683,000. There

has been received from the Commonwealth Government on this account £594,689. Rebates of interest, etc., made to soldiers amount to £388,320.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That amount includes losses, of course.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the full amount so far as the bank is concerned.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But it includes losses.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The largest part of it is represented by rebate of interest. The balance in the Treasury is £206,369, and the balance to be paid by the Commonwealth is £89,311. These balances represent a total of £294,680 remaining to meet further rebates of interest, etc., on moneys loaned to soldiers. I gather from the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank that the whole of this total will be required for the purpose of meeting rebates to soldiers. There is another misunderstanding in regard to the arrangements made. It was understood that on all loan moneys devoted to soldier settlement there would be a rebate. However, the Commonwealth Government refused to expend any moneys relatively to the Industries Assistance Board. If I mistake not, the rebate on amounts expended under the Industries Assistance Board should be about £70,000. We thought we would try to get some of that, even if the Commonwealth would not pay the whole. However, the Federal Government declined to pay any part of it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Those are temporary advances.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: But they now amount to about a million sterling, and the members of the board inform me that from £300,000 to £500,000 of the total will be lost.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They must be wrong there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Repayment is not anticipated so far as soldier settlement is concerned. There is another point that is lost sight of by some hon. members and by many of the soldier settlers. Not only does the agreement provide for an immediate reduction of £796,000, but it also provides for a reduction of one per cent. in the rate of interest after the 31st December, 1930. This means that every soldier settler will get a reduction of one per cent. in the rate of interest over a period of 20 years. That also will run into a fair sum of money. If members will look at the schedule they will see that the rate

of interest varies from £5 5s. 3d. to £7 5s., the average being £6 8s. 9d., but that after the 31st December, 1930, the amount to be charged by the Commonwealth is 5 per cent. and by the State $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The board have made reductions totalling something like £200,000 already, and the soldiers should be able to receive that reduction after the 30th June this year. The interest rebate is made from the 1st January last. I regret that the Commonwealth Parliament have not ratified the agreement. When I found that the Federal session was closing down without such ratification, I wired regarding the matter, pointing out that we were ready to make some reductions under the proposed scheme. When the Bill was first printed we sent copies to the Commonwealth Government and asked them whether we should make the proposed reduction to the soldiers. To-day I received this letter—

I desire to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 3rd August intimating that a Bill has been introduced into the Western Australian Parliament ratifying the agreement between the Commonwealth and the States in regard to soldier land settlement, and asking whether on the passing of this Bill you could make certain adjustments in settlers' accounts on the understanding that the Commonwealth Parliament will also ratify this agreement. As you are aware, the Commonwealth has already arranged with the States that interest will be collected on the reduced indebtedness provided for in the agreement; the acceptance of the reduced amount not to prejudice the right of the Commonwealth to collect the full interest if, at a later date, the agreement is not ratified by the Parliaments of the Commonwealth and the State. On the principle thus laid down the adjustment of soldiers' accounts is concurred in so far as they are dependent on the agreement between the State and the Commonwealth. The State itself, however, must carry the risk of the agreement with the State not being ratified by the Commonwealth Parliament, and in this connection I have to state that it is regretted that pressure of business would not admit of the Commonwealth Parliament dealing with the ratifying Bill during the session that has just closed. Yours faithfully, (Sgd.) W. C. Hill, for Prime Minister.

So it will be seen that, although the reductions have been made, we cannot say definitely to the soldiers whose land has been revalued that they will get the benefit of such reductions. The manager of the Agricultural Bank informed me to-day that he is preparing a letter to send to the soldiers concerned stating that if the agreement be ratified their indebtedness will be reduced by so much, and that they will pay interest

in accordance with the reduced debit, and giving them notification that if the Commonwealth Parliament does not ratify the agreement the amount of interest not paid will have to be charged again. This proposal was first placed before the Federal Parliament in 1925. I cannot see why the Commonwealth Government did not get the approval of Parliament for the agreement and then wait for the States to ratify it.

Mr. Thomson: Is there any possibility of the other States raising objections?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know. This will be of great value to the soldiers. It is scarcely necessary for me to tell members that the soldiers have already got this £796,000, the proposed reduction, and that the reduction is only a reduction in the interest they have to pay. There seems to be abroad the impression that the State is getting another grant of £796,000. Of course that is not so. The soldiers already have that money, and the proposed reduction is merely a reduction in interest. When the soldiers' holdings are dealt with on their merits—the board is not reducing all holdings, but only those where reductions are justified—the interest is paid to the State by the soldier, and the State has to pay the Commonwealth.

Mr. Thomson: You propose to reduce the soldiers' indebtedness by £796,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It may be more. The amount written down already is some £200,000.

Mr. Thomson: In what district?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say; I leave that to the board. All I get are the returns and the total amount. However, that is the position. I think the Government are justified in accepting the agreements, and justified in accepting a reduction in the interest rate after 1930. There is a good deal of controversy about those qualified, yet not placed on the land. Those persons had every opportunity to go on the land. It is eight years ago since the war finished, and still those men have not gone on the land, nor yet made applications for land. Some of them did. When it was pointed out to me that some had made applications, I agreed to allow £25,000 to be used for the time being in regard to further reduction of interest in settling soldiers on the land. That arrangement was agreed to by the returned soldiers. Members should realise that this money on which the reduction was made has been granted in loans already made to soldiers. It is much better to

use this money to enable a man on the land to be successful than it would be to use the money in putting another man on the land when perhaps both would be without much chance of success. The reduction can only be made on money already advanced. I cannot see why the State, with so much new soldier settlement, should run the risk of bearing all the loss itself. As I have said, this is the final payment by the Commonwealth. If we put new settlers on the land, the cost must come out of this fund, whereas I maintain that this fund was meant for the soldiers already on the land. It is our duty to deal with those men who went on the land during that 12 months before we were aware of the withdrawal of the rebate. The State must stand any loss there may have been in respect of them. I draw members' attention to a printer's error in Clause 14. In line 4 of that clause "2 per cent." should be "2½ per cent." The schedule speaks for itself. It is very clear. I confidently believe that immediately the settlers are able to get the benefit, the great majority of them will be placed on a proper footing. I may also add that from inquiries made I have learnt that soldier settlement in Western Australia is on a better footing than in any other part of Australia, and that a great majority of the soldiers have been more successful. That is a very satisfactory state of affairs. Many soldiers have sold out their properties at big profits. I regret that they are leaving the land.

Mr. Davy: Perhaps they have only left one block to take up another.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The worst of it is that in some cases they spend their money and then come back to have a second shot at the land. Fortunately, however, all are not like that. In the wheat areas the soldiers have done splendidly, and I feel confident that the reduction will add to the successes.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [10.5] in moving the second reading said: This is only a small Bill and it is to rectify an omission from the measure passed last ses-

sion. It was provided in that measure that every owner of a holding should pay to the Minister annually on demand the rate fixed by the Minister. It was decided that the rate should be collected by the Taxation Department at the same time as the land tax was collected, and that the assessments should be sent out at the same period. The Taxation Department assesses as from the 1st July in every year, and so that the department may undertake this duty at the same time as they are sending out the land tax assessments, I ask the House to agree to the amendment. In that way the rate will be struck on the same day as the land tax is struck. No rates have been collected yet because I have been waiting to introduce the amendment. The passing of the Bill will obviate the creation of another office for collecting the rates. That would not be desirable because we have the machinery of the Taxation Department available and it can be used without extra cost. The Act passed last session provided that the money should be credited to a fund to be kept by the Department of Agriculture. It would be more convenient if the money were paid to the Treasury and drawn from the Treasury on the Minister's certificate. That is the second amendment in the Bill and I hope the House will agree to it as well. The third amendment provides that any person who has erected a vermin-proof fence shall have the right to go on the adjoining property if he desires to keep his fence in repair. It is not often that settlers object to other settlers going on to their properties in order to effect repairs to a fence, but there have been occasions when this has happened. The amendment will give a settler power to go on to his neighbour's property for the reason I have stated. Those are the only three amendments in the Bill which I hope will be agreed to.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

BILL—PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [10.10] in moving the second reading said: This also is a small Bill to amend the Plant Diseases Act passed last year. That

Act provides means by which the inspectors in the Agricultural Department are able to do good work in endeavouring to combat the fruit fly. During the activities of the department it was discovered that the spread of the pest was due largely to neglect in respect of what we might call backyard orchards and orchards owned by week-enders. The department conducted no fewer than 65 prosecutions to compel people to clean up their orchards. The Act gives an inspector power to enter an orchard, but when he goes to a week-end camp, he does not find the occupier there. The work of cleaning up the orchard has to be done by the department and it is proposed to give the inspector power not only to do that, but to charge the cost up to the occupier.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Will you give notice to the owner before you exercise that power?

Mr. Sampson: Action in that respect has already been taken.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have had to do it, but we have experienced difficulty in collecting the charges. The Bill will help us in that respect.

Mr. Davy: You will be under no obligation to give notice under this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is necessary to get to work immediately. If we looked around for the occupier, we might not discover him for a week or two. The Bill gives us power to clean up the orchard and then make the occupier pay the cost. That is perfectly reasonable. If the City Council served me with a notice to fence a block of land, and I did not do so, they would fence it and charge me with the cost.

Mr. Davy: Here you propose to do it without giving notice.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We cannot always find the owners and it is important that the work should be done immediately. In South Perth not long ago, we had the greatest difficulty in discovering the occupier.

Mr. Davy: The point is that an inspector could do the work without finding the occupier.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We shall administer the Act with discretion.

Mr. Davy: The Minister would not have to authorise this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Act authorises every prosecution.

On motion by Mr. Sampson debate adjourned.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation in connection with the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [10.13] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill to amend Section 10 of the Agricultural Bank Act which provides for the fees to be paid to the Managing Trustee and his two colleagues. For some years, almost since the Act was passed, the amount provided as salary for the Managing Trustee has been £1,000 per annum. We are all aware that the work of the bank has increased considerably and the Managing Trustee is still drawing £1,000 per annum. During the year the Public Service has been reclassified, but it is impossible to increase the salary of the Managing Trustee without an amendment of the Act. The Bill provides that the Managing Trustee shall receive a sum not exceeding £1,500 instead of £1,000. We consider that in comparison with the managers of other banks, this officer is not now being paid a salary commensurate with the services that he renders. It is proposed to increase the amount paid to the trustees by an additional £100 for each, that is to say, that each will receive £250 instead of £150. In consequence of the increased work there will have to be more meetings of the trustees than has been the case in the past. The managing trustees' colleagues have been remunerated at so much per sitting. This means that to get more the trustees would have to sit on extra occasions. They do a lot of work that is not paid for at all, and their time is occupied considerably with bank work. I do not think any hon. member will consider excessive the amounts it is proposed to pay.

Mr. Thomson: They are very modest.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is surprising that the payments were not increased a long time ago.

Mr. Davy: Is the position of the Managing Trustee a full-time one?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yés.

Mr. Davy: The manager of the Western Australian Bank gets £2,500.

The Premier: But that is a wealthy institution.

Mr. Davy: In view of that figure no one can complain regarding the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hon. members are probably aware who the trustees are. Mr. McLarty is the Managing Trustee and Messrs. C. J. Moran and Cooke are the trustees. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [10.18]: I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. Mr. McLarty has been the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank for a long time and in that position has had to carry great responsibilities. Since he received his appointment, the operations of the Industries Assistance Board were added to his responsibilities and then followed those attached to the Soldier Settlement Scheme and the Group Settlement Scheme. I am afraid I was responsible for having added that work to the duties to be carried out by the Managing Trustee. Mr. McLarty is an excellent officer. I know no one in the State who is more capable. From the inception he has been connected with the bank and certainly he is the most experienced farm-maker in Australia. He has been connected with the making of more farms than any other man in Australasia, and he has had to work on material very different from that available in the other States. In Western Australia, as the work had to be done quickly, we had to take inexperienced men without any capital at all. Hon. members know that the bank found the necessary capital in order to cover the cost of making the farms complete. The whole of the obligations rested upon the Managing Trustee and unless we had amended the law to enable him to carry out the work, it would not have been possible to settle men without money. To-day we are looking forward to the possibility of producing 30,000,000 bushels of wheat. For the most part that wheat will be grown by men who were formerly customers of Mr. McLarty's bank. That is a wonderful achievement. When one looks back over the time Mr. McLarty has been connected with the Agricultural Bank, it is certain that no other country in the world has done anything like it. In no country has there

been found an over-supply of experienced agriculturists. We could not draw them from any country and therefore we had to take inexperienced men. Mr. McLarty has succeeded in turning clergymen, lawyers, politicians, lumpers and others, including civil servants, into experienced farmers.

Mr. Lindsay: And he turned some of the farmers into politicians, too. Here is one of them.

Hon. G. Taylor: But they have not made much of a success of it!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We will not saddle that sin upon the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank. He does not want anyone to leave a farm to come to Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: He wants them to stay on the land.

Mr. Heron: They are more useful there.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Mr. McLarty is a man of vast experience and is capable in many directions, no matter what we may ask him to put his hand to. He is possessed of great common sense and ability. He has proved himself to be a most reliable man in all that he has undertaken. I am glad indeed to support the Bill and I hope that he will receive the full salary of £1,500 because he has been doing useful work for years without extra payment at all. When the settlement of returned soldiers had to be faced, we had soldiers here who were out of work. Settling them on the land had to be done quickly. Little preparation had been made for them and I can remember how acute the position was in 1919. For some 20 months not more than 13 soldiers had been settled per month. For three months after April, 1919, Mr. McLarty settled the soldiers at the rate of 100 a week for the most part on repurchased properties. There was no time to be lost as the men were here. Promises had been made to them and those promises had to be carried out. Mr. McLarty is the one above others who was responsible for carrying out the work. As the Minister has rightly pointed out, the position of managing trustee is outside the scope of the Public Service Act and the Commissioner, therefore, could not grant any increase. The only way by which it can be done is by amending the Act. Has not the Minister made a slight mistake regarding the trustee's fees? Is not the maximum £150?

The Minister for Lands: That provision was amended.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I remember now that the amendment provided that the maximum amount would be 250 guineas a year. The responsibilities carried out by these officials is indeed considerable and, taking into account all the different activities covered by them, the amount involved must be not less than £12,000,000.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [10.25]: It was the late Sir John Forrest who established the Agricultural Bank in, I think, 1894, a few years after he had become Premier. He also initiated the scheme for providing homestead blocks and for the advancing of money to enable settlers to improve their farms. When he decided to establish an Agricultural Bank he chose as manager the late Mr. William Paterson, who at that time represented the Murray constituency in the Legislative Assembly. Among the first to join the Bank was Mr. McLarty. I think Mr. J. B. Stevenson was the accountant and Mr. McLarty was next in seniority. There was a staff of four. Mr. McLarty has been associated with the Bank ever since. Following upon the banking activities, there were established the Industries Assistance Board, the Soldier Settlement Scheme and the Group Settlement Scheme. Respecting these different institutions, the responsibility attached to Mr. McLarty and the trustees. They have carried out a most important work and when we realise that the salaries of managers of private concerns range from £1,500 to £2,500 a year, and that those concerns do not control anything like such large advances as are made by Agricultural Bank trustees, no hon. member will object to the increases proposed. I have had many opportunities of appreciating Mr. McLarty's work since 1902 and I am glad to see that the Government recognise the good work he has done, with the assistance of the trustees of the Agricultural Bank.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.28]: It seems to me that the remuneration given to the trustees does not represent very liberal payment in view of the responsibilities they have to carry. What about the trustee who has to go round the districts making valuations?

The Minister for Lands: He is paid extra for that.

MR. THOMSON: If payment is made for that separately, that is all right.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [10.29]: In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, I would point out that the Act was amended in 1909 by including the word "guineas" and that accounts for the alteration I indicated by way of interjection. I would like to make it clear to hon. members that it is the intention of the Government to pay the managing trustee the amount mentioned, namely £1,500, from the time the classification was made. It was pointed out by the Public Service Commissioner that he had no power to increase the salary of the managing trustee but he provided allowances for other work. In the opinion of the Government those allowances were not sufficient.

The Premier: And it was not the proper way to do it.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 25th August, 1926.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m. and read prayers.

PAPERS—WAGIN WATER SUPPLY.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East): I move—

That the files relating to the Wagin water supply be laid on the Table of the House.